

TULSA WORLD

Letter to the Editor: Major barriers

BY Sheppard F. Miers Jr., Tulsa

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Cancer research experts are speaking out about the political stalemate in Congress and pending federal budget cuts on science.

Dr. Harold Varmus, Nobel Prizewinning cancer researcher and National Cancer Institute director, spoke to the National Press Club Sept. 25. He said that despite progress, there are still major barriers to defeating cancer. That is because cancer is now known to be a set of differing and complex cellular diseases.

Finding cures, through NCI grants to top researchers, is just as complex. Genetics discovery can be converted to targeted clinical treatments of cancer by reliable and increased federal funding of research.

An American Association for Cancer Research physicians and scientists panel published a comprehensive 2012 cancer progress report calling cancer research investment a national priority. Oncologist Siddhartha Mukherjee, M. D., Pulitzer Prize-winning author on cancer, said in a Newsweek article how the premature death of Apple Inc. founder Steve Jobs from an incurable cancer showed our need for increased cancer research funding.

One in four other Americans is now expected to die of cancer.

The best minds on cancer say Congress has to spend more, not less on science to stop cancer deaths.

The Stephenson Cancer Center at the University of Oklahoma is now a premier research and clinical institution.

Federal grants help its talented scientists lead in the search for life saving discoveries. Please contact congressional officeholders and candidates. Tell them to approve major federal government funding increases for the National Cancer Institute.

Editor's note: Miers is Director of the Charlene Miers Foundation for Cancer Research.